WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for enabling voice over Internet for computer applications, comprising the steps of

registering session initiation protocol (SIP) as a system service;

providing SIP service through an application programming interface (API) to permit access to service functions by individual software applications;

providing a SIP link within a software application to permit user invocation of SIP service functions; and

passing the link as a parameter to permit external access to an invoked service function.

2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of registering includes registering a SIP protocol handler.

3. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of registering includes registering the SIP with an operating system protocol.

4. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of registering includes registering the SIP with application control logic for an application.

5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the step of providing SIP service through an application programming interface (API) includes recognizing SIP links within the application.

6. The method as recited in claim 5, further comprising the step of highlighting the SIP link in a user interface of the application to permit users to click on the SIP links.

7. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the SIP link includes a URL and the step of passing the link as a parameter includes passing the URL to another party.

8. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the step of initiating a conference call by passing the passing the link to other parties to permit the other parties to join the conference call.

9. The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the application includes a distributed application and the SIP link is passed to the distributed application running on other user platforms permitting a plurality of parties to have access to the same SIP link.

10. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the distributed application includes one of an instant messaging program, a teleconferencing program, and an email program.

11. A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for enabling voice over Internet for computer applications as recited in claim 1.

12. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the external access includes setting up a common web page to set up a voice conference with a plurality of users.

13. A method for enabling voice over Internet for computer applications, comprising the steps of

registering session initiation protocol (SIP) as a

system service;

providing SIP service through an application programming interface (API) to permit access to service functions by individual software applications by recognizing SIP links within the application and highlighting the SIP link in a user interface of the application to permit users to select the SIP links; and

passing the link as a parameter to permit external access to an invoked service function.

14. The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the step of registering includes registering a SIP protocol handler.

15. The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the step of registering includes registering the SIP with an operating system protocol.

16. The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the step of registering includes registering the SIP with application control logic for an application.

17. The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the SIP link includes a URL and the step of passing the link as a parameter includes passing the URL to another party.

18. The method as recited in claim 13, further comprising the step of initiating a conference call by passing the link to other parties to permit the other parties to join the conference call.

19. The method as recited in claim 18, wherein the application includes a distributed application and the SIP link is passed to the distributed application running on other user platforms permitting a plurality of parties to have access to the same SIP link.

20. The method as recited in claim 19, wherein the distributed application includes one of an instant messaging program, a teleconferencing program, and an email program.

21. The method as recited in claim 13, wherein the external access includes setting up a common web page to set up a voice conference with a plurality of users.

22. A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps for enabling voice over Internet for computer applications, the method steps comprising:

registering session initiation protocol (SIP) as a system service;

providing SIP service through an application programming interface (API) to permit access to service functions by individual software applications by recognizing SIP links within the application and highlighting the SIP link in a user interface of the application to permit users to select the SIP links; and

passing the link as a parameter to permit external access to an invoked service function.

23. A system for providing a session initiation protocol (SIP) service on a client machine, comprising:

a SIP softphone, which transmits and receives voice packets and provides basic call setup and teardown functions directly from a client machine;

a SIP thin client, which invokes SIP signaling for call setup and teardown from an external entity to the client machine;

a SIP wrapper, which based on user input, passes control to either the thin client or the softphone; and

a SIP application programming interface (API), which permits different applications to access SIP service.

24. The system as recited in claim 23, wherein the external entity includes one of an Internet Protocol (IP) phone and a publicly switched telephone network (PSTN) phone.

25. The system as recited in claim 23, wherein the client machine includes an integrated software implementation for SIP signaling for call setup and teardown.

26. The system as recited in claim 23, wherein the client machine includes an integrated software implementation for SIP signaling for call transfer the external entity.

27. The system as recited in claim 23, wherein the client machine includes an integrated software implementation for SIP signaling to subscribe to events occurring on other devices/phones.

28. The system as recited in claim 23, wherein the client machine includes an integrated software implementation for SIP signaling to notify other interested subscribers of occurrences of pre-defined events on the client machine.

29. The system as recited in claim 23, wherein the client machine includes an integrated software implementation for transmitting/receiving media packets to/from the client machine.

30. The system as recited in claim 23, wherein the client machine includes an integrated software implementation for modifying media parameters for a call in progress.

31. The system as recited in claim 23, wherein the client machine includes an integrated software

implementation for a programmatic interface that permits other applications on the client machine to invoke SIP functions.